

THE EVANGELIST.

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FOR THE EVANGELIST.

ON ANGER.

Of all the victories ever achieved by men, *that over their spirits* is the most difficult. To subjugate provinces, to lay waste cities, to subvert even extensive and powerful kingdoms, is an easy work compared with the subjugation of an unruly temper. But the work is as glorious, as it is difficult.

The man who can govern himself, who can rule the empire of his own breast, is justly entitled to more renown, than the mightiest conqueror, the world ever produced. "He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." I propose to offer, Mr. Editor, for the consideration of your readers, a few remarks on the passion of anger. The *evil effects* of this passion, together with some *remedies* against it, will constitute the train of thought before us. It may be proper to premise that anger is not sinful, in itself considered. "Be ye angry, said Paul to the Ephesians, and sin not." Our Saviour was angry. "And he looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." We *may*, and even *ought* to feel a holy indignation against workers of iniquity. While we commiserate their condition, and labour to reclaim them from the error of their ways, we cannot but hate their moral characters. Anger is sinful only when it is indulged without a cause, or when it is indulged to excess. In most instances, men are angry *without a cause*. Indeed, we have known men, to become exceedingly provoked, by the very considerations, that ought to have called forth their gratitude. Herod was angry with John the Baptist, because he reprov'd him, for his incestuous marriage. The hearers of the apostles sometimes became so offended with them for their plain and pungent discourses, that they were ready to destroy them. The question which the Lord put to Cain might with propriety be put to every angry man. "Why art thou wroth?" What

is the *cause* of thine anger? If there be no justifiable cause, it is sinful.

Anger, also, becomes sinful, when it is indulged to excess. There may be a real cause of anger, and yet that cause, not sufficient to warrant the degree of excitement, which is produced. For a very trifling provocation some allow themselves to fly into the most violent rage. Like a ship without a helm, they are carried away with the tempest.—

With these thoughts premised, I proceed to remark, that anger (that is sinful anger) is often injurious to health.

The passions, says a certain Medical writer, have great influence both in the cause and cure of diseases. Anger ruffles the mind, distorts the countenance, hurries on the circulation of blood, and disorders the whole animal and vital functions.

It often causes fevers, and other acute diseases, and sometimes, even sudden death.

This passion is peculiarly hurtful to the delicate, and those of weak nerves. I have known such persons frequently lose their lives by a violent fit of anger, and would advise them to guard against the excess of this passion with the utmost care.

Valentinian the Just, Wenuslaus, and Matthias Corvinus, are all said to have fallen victims to this passion.

2. Anger leads to the destruction of property. How many lawsuits are the legitimate offspring of an irritated state of mind! To justify an angry and revengeful spirit, how many have sacrificed their estates, even to the last cent!

3. Anger leads to *other sins*.

Much bitter and reproachful language is often uttered, by men intoxicated with anger, that never would have come from their lips in their sober moments. A striking instance of this we have in Moses,—the meekest man recorded on the sacred page. The Psalmist tells us that the Israelites angered God at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes, because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake *unadvisedly with his lips*. But an angry man not unfrequently goes further, and gives vent to his anger by the utterance of profane language. As full as the world is of profane swearing, by far the greater part, it is believed, originates from this source. How many men, when free from the influence of anger, are never heard to utter a profane expression; yet the moment they are thrown into a state of irritation, they begin to curse, and to swear, as if they were the vilest miscreants on earth.

To profaneness may be added lying. An angry man is wont to utter falsehood.

Though no sin, it may be, is more severely reprobated by him than this, when his spirit is calm, and unruffled, yet when thrown into a fit of anger, his tongue becomes an ungovernable member. He regards not the truth.

But men in anger not only *say*, but *do* that which is wrong. Who can tell the acts of iniquity which proceed from this source! Think of the stripes, the bruises, and the broken bones! Think of the cruelty shown to wives, and children, and domesticks! Think

too of the murders which have been committed under the influence of anger ! What Jacob said of his two sons, Simeon and Levi, might with equal truth be said of many. " In their anger they slew a man. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel."

4. Anger unfits men for the service of God. What religious duty is a man under the influence of this passion, fit to perform ? Is he in a proper state of mind to instruct his children in the principles of morality and religion ? Can he sit down and reason with them of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come ? Is he in a suitable frame of mind to come to the family-altar ? If he offers sacrifice ;—will it not be an abomination in God's sight ? Or is he prepared to approach the table of the Lord ? Is he in possession of that serenity of mind, that calmness of spirit, that charity towards all men, without which he will eat and drink judgment to himself ? " What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? Or what communion hath light with darkness ?" And what agreement, let me add, between the passions of anger, and the feelings of devotion ?

5. Anger occasions many unhappy divisions. It divides *families*. It sets the father against the son, and the son against the father ; the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother, the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter against her mother in law. A man's foes thus become those of his own household.

It divides *Societies*. " An angry man, says Solomon, stirreth up strife." How much discord and contention may be sown in a place by a single individual ! Let his angry passions be excited, and let him go forth a flaming firebrand, and who can tell the mischief which will ensue ? How many societies, once united and happy, have by this means been thrown into a state of turmoil and confusion ! A tornado does not produce more disastrous effects upon the forests and fields through which it passes, than a spirit of anger stirred up, does in human society.

It divides *nations*. " From whence come wars and fightings among you ! come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members ?" All wars have their origin in the depraved passions of men. How often has a whole nation been roused to arms, because some trifling event had given offence to their Sovereign ! What untold numbers have been hurried into eternity, to gratify the base, and I may add, the hellish passion of which I am speaking ? This leads me to remark once more that anger assimilates men to Devils. Ever since Satan was turned out of heaven, he has been filled with anger.

This appears from the whole tenor of his conduct ; besides, the scriptures expressly assert it. " Wo to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ; for the devil has come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time." Though satan is always angry, yet by reason of certain circumstances, his anger may be more violent at one time, than at another. His rage, we may see acted out through the medium of some whom

he possessed in the time of Christ. Take an instance—And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gagezenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass that way.” These Devils, it will be observed, were so furious that they became a terror to all the inhabitants of that region.

The question has sometimes been asked, By what motives can the Devil be influenced in his operations and movements against the kingdom of God, since from his knowledge of the divine character, he must be sensible that he cannot succeed in overturning it? Reader, did you never see a child in a fit of anger, try to hurt its parent? Or did you never see a man blazing with passion, strike at his neighbor, without any regard to his neighbour’s superior strength, or considering that the blow may be returned with a vengeance? Now precisely in the same way that you can account for the conduct of this child, and this man, can the conduct of the Devil be accounted for, in his attempts to overturn the kingdom of God. The truth is, they are all mad; or they would never act thus.

Their reason is departed from them, and they are driven headlong by their furious and ungovernable passions. It is obvious therefore, that an angry man, for the time being, bears a striking resemblance to the Devil. And whenever, reader, you see a man under the influence of this passion, pouring forth his execrations, and becoming a terror to all around him, you have perhaps the most perfect picture of hell, which this world furnishes. What shall be done to guard against a vice productive of so many evils?

1. Deliberate—It is reported of Julius Cæsar that when he was provoked to anger, he would never make any reply, until he had repeated the Roman alphabet. If a man under the highest provocation would but pause and consider, he would seldom speak or act improperly. Not a few, when overtaken by a sudden gust of passion, instead of resisting it, and maintaining with firmness their ground, allow themselves to be driven to and fro by its fury. But this ought not so to be. Before we suffer our angry passions to rise, we should inquire whether there exists a justifiable cause of anger, and to what extent, it ought to be carried. If reason can be kept on her throne, these passions will be kept in subjection; if not, they will rage and foam like the troubled sea. Let every man, then, settle it in his mind, never to speak or act, till he has first deliberated, and ascertained what is proper to be spoken or done.

2. Avoid bad company. Make no friendship, said Solomon, with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul. If you wish to shun a contagious disease, you must keep at a distance from it. So if you would avoid the sin of anger, you must not go into the company of the quarrelsome. “Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burnt?” “There are those, as one justly remarks, to be found in almost every society, who are sauntering about from place to place, who haunt public houses, whose chief business is to be tale-bearers, who stir up strife and division, insulting all most every one they meet. These pests to society we ought

to avoid, as we would bears and lions. It may be remarked in this place, that anger is not only contagious, but increases by indulgence. Like other vicious propensities, the more it is cherished, the more inveterate it becomes, and the more difficult to overcome it ;—a circumstance which ought to admonish the young to begin early to govern their passions, and by all means to avoid such company as may expose them to temptation.

3. Think of your exposed situation in a fit of anger. “He that hath no rule over his spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls.” Self-government is an impregnable fortress. It throws around a man, a shield which will defend him from the assaults of his enemies. But he that hath no rule over his spirit, lies exposed to every wicked and malicious invader. There are those base enough to sport with a man’s infirmities, and who are willing to provoke him to anger, for the very purpose of rendering him ridiculous and contemptible. How easy is it for such to keep one who has no government over his passions in a constant state of irritation and faithfulness, and to expose him to the rage of his enemies.

Once more, pray for grace to help in time of need. “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not.” However powerful the temptation to the sin under consideration, God is *able* to deliver you from it. Look then, to him for assistance. If it be practicable, retire by yourself, and spread your case before the Lord, and pray that you may in patience possess your souls. If this cannot be done, let your heart rise in secret supplication to God, that he would keep you in the hour of temptation, and suffer you neither to say nor do any thing, for which you will have occasion to repent hereafter.

W. A.

FOR THE EVANGELIST.

ON DOING RIGHT WITHOUT A GOOD HEART.

NO. II.

Having shown, in a former paper, *when* men may be said to do that, which is right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart; and also, *how* such characters are held in the divine estimation, my design in this is to *notice some things, which should lead persons to apprehend, that such is their character.*

It should be borne in mind that the subject has especial respect to persons, the general tenor of whose lives is, outwardly, in some good measure conformed to divine precepts. As to those who openly cast off fear and restrain prayer before God; those who are, outwardly, as well as at heart, immoral and irreligious, though they may indeed do some things, which, as to the external act, are right in the sight of the Lord; they are not such persons as Amaziah was. It would be improper to characterize them, as persons, who

do what is right in the sight of the Lord, even externally. They are even in the view of others, characteristically wicked. All who are acquainted with them, and who have any correct views of what God requires, must pronounce them wicked. Such is the character, therefore, which, without the least hesitation, they should appropriate to themselves. No particular attention to the feelings of their hearts, or to the motives of their conduct, can be necessary to enable them to determine with certainty, what is their character in the view of God. As their fruit is characteristically corrupt, they may be certain that it is the fruit of a corrupt tree. Their evil conduct proceeds from an evil heart. But the persons, who may be justly characterized as Amaziah was, are those, whose outward conduct and conversation are so far agreeable to the gospel, that it must be difficult, if not impossible for others to say with certainty, that they are not christians indeed. Such persons may sometimes find it necessary to attend carefully to the exercises of their own hearts, to be able to judge accurately concerning themselves. If, however, any who are more openly wicked are ready to judge favourably of themselves, because they do some things, which are externally right, the observations which are now to be made, may be of much use to them also, and enable them to discover their self deception and blindness. But the things to be noticed, will have more immediate respect to those, who may be characterized, as doing that outwardly, which is right in the sight of the Lord.

1. Those who do that, which is right in the sight of the Lord, have reason to apprehend, that they do it not with a perfect heart, when they find themselves very much influenced to the performance of duty by the fear of future punishment. There is much reason to believe, that some persons, who are scrupulous and exact in their outward deportment, are influenced mainly by fear. They know something about what God requires, and what he forbids. They know something about the tremendous penalty with which the law is sanctioned. And they have some fearful apprehensions, that this awful penalty will be inflicted on those, who are found regardless of divine requirements and prohibitions. Hence, though they do not delight in the law of the Lord, and have no suitable regard to God himself, they are afraid openly to transgress his law. Accordingly, they put restraints on their own inclinations, and yield an external obedience to those precepts of the law, which respect outward conduct. They perform externally the duties of religion and morality. They pray, and read the scriptures, and attend the public worship of God, and observe the Sabbath, and are honest and just in their dealings, and it may be, liberal to the poor and afflicted; and they refrain from profaneness, and unchastity, and evil speaking, and other gross sins. But after all, fear is the leading principle, which drives them on, in this course of outward obedience. Free them from this, and their restraints would be broken, and obedience would no longer be rendered. This has often been exemplified. Many persons, who, believing the doctrine of future endless punishment, have rendered something of this obedience, have afterwards embraced the doctrine of universal salvation, and the conse-

quence has been, that they have cast off restraints, and become openly irreligious, immoral, and profane. They have made it evident, that their obedience was the fruit of fear, and not of love, and therefore was not rendered with a perfect heart. Others, therefore, who find themselves influenced to an external obedience by a fear of punishment, have much reason to apprehend, that their hearts are not right with God. Love, and not this fear of punishment, is that which influences to all acceptable obedience. It is indeed true, that the Scriptures speak of a fear, which has influence in this obedience. But it is not this fear of punishment. It is a filial, reverential fear, which is itself the fruit of love, as all acceptable obedience is. Let love rule in the heart, and influence the obedience, and then, though all fear of punishment be removed, obedience will still be regarded. Angels and saints in glory are obedient. But they have no fear of future punishment. They are influenced by love.

“Tis love that makes their cheerful feet,”
“In swift obedience move.”

And our obedience should be like theirs. Indeed, all acceptable obedience, in this respect, is like theirs. It is the fruit of love. Those who render this obedience are pleased with divine precepts, as honorable to that God, whom they fervently love, as holy, just, and good. And they take delight and satisfaction in the ways of obedience. They can say with the Psalmist, O how love I thy law. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right. I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. I repeat it, therefore, those who do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, if they find the fear of future punishment has much influence in procuring their obedience, have reason to apprehend, that what they do is not with a perfect heart.

2. Those who do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, have reason to apprehend, that it is not with a perfect heart, if they place dependance on their doings, as a ground of acceptance with God. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, does indeed teach men, that denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. But it certainly does not teach them, to place any dependance on such a life, as a ground of acceptance with God. Though without holiness no man shall see the Lord; yet with holiness of heart and life, as much as can be produced in any man, we must depend solely on the merits of Christ's atonement for justification and life. If, indeed, men find themselves influenced to those things, which are right in the sight of the Lord, by love to God, and love to Christ, and love to man; if they find that they truly delight in the law of God after the inner man, they may safely receive it as evidence, that a saving change has been effected in their hearts; that they have become new creatures; and that they are accepted in the beloved;—in a word, that for Christ's sake, their sins are pardoned, and their souls shall be saved. But since all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, our own works, even though in future they should

be perfect, can have no place in procuring salvation. Those therefore, who depend on their own works, refuse salvation as a matter of mere grace, withhold from the Redeemer the glory, which the gospel ascribes to him, and assign an importance to their own works, which proves that their hearts are not right with God. Indeed, those who work merely from the hope of reward for their services, can no more be influenced to obedience by love, than those who are driven forward by a fear of punishment. I do not mean by this, that those whose hearts are perfect, *do not hope*, or that they *should not hope*. No, they have indeed a hope, which may well animate their exertions, and enliven their zeal. But it is not the hope of securing heaven by any merit of their own. It is the hope of glory to be bestowed on them, by the unmerited favour of God, through Jesus Christ. It is a hope which is consistent with their yielding all the obedience they can, and yet acknowledging themselves unprofitable servants. It is a hope which ascribes their salvation solely to the riches of divine grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. This hope may have place with one, who works righteousness with a perfect heart. But he who hopes for salvation by any works of righteousness of his own, may be assured, that whatever he does, it is not with a perfect heart.

3. Those who do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, have reason to apprehend, that it is not with a perfect heart, if they are not deeply affected with a sense of their own sinfulness. There are persons who are somewhat attentive to religious and moral duties, whose life and conversation are so far conformed to the precepts of the gospel, as to be in a great measure unobjectionable, who after all, appear to have very little, if any sense of their own sinfulness. They seem to have no realizing sense of their depravity and vileness. And such persons usually profess, that they can see no need of that change of heart, on which the Scriptures insist so much.

But the Scriptures make much of a deep and heart-affecting sense of sin. They require repentance towards God, as well as faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They teach also, that all are sinners before the Lord exceedingly. Accordingly we find, that the benedictions of the gospel are bestowed on the *poor in spirit*; on those who *mourn*; on the *humble* and *contrite*; and God, designating the man, with whom he delights to dwell, describes him as being of a *humble* and *contrite* spirit. "Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity; I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also who is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word; to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." The character here described, is obviously that of one, who is deeply affected with a sense of his own sinfulness and vileness. With a sense of sinfulness his heart is broken, and he is melted into the tenderness of godly sorrow, and loathes himself in his own sight, for his transgressions against the Lord. The man therefore, who is very little, if at all, affected with his own sinfulness and vileness, cannot be of this humble and contrite spirit. He cannot be one of those, therefore, with whom God

says he dwells. Hence all such persons, whatever may be their outward character and conduct, have reason to fear that their hearts are not right in the sight of God.

4. Those who do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, have reason to apprehend, that it is not with a perfect heart, if the question, whether openly to profess and practise religion is popular, or unpopular, has much influence upon their minds, and upon their practice. There have been seasons, when it has been a very popular thing to profess the religion of the gospel, and practise its external duties. There have been places, where at times almost all the people, most respectable for wealth and influence in society, have been professors of religion. There are, even now, some such places. In such seasons, and in such societies, it becomes unpopular, and in a measure disgraceful, for any one not to profess religion, and conform his practice to its precepts. In such seasons, if I may use the expression of a very *valuable*, though somewhat *obsolete* writer, "Religion walks abroad in her silver slippers." It becomes a very fashionable thing to be religious. And it requires a kind of self-denial not to be in some measure religious, in profession and practice.

Such is the case in some places, and in some measure, even in our day, when God remarkably pours out his spirit and calls up the attention of almost whole congregations, to the things of religion, making many "willing in the day of his power." In such seasons, no doubt it is common, for some to fall in with the current, and be borne along with the feelings of others, and become quite religious, merely because it is fashionable. They even become zealous and engaged, only because it is a common thing to be so. Let the scene change, let professors of religion grow cold and languid, and let infidelity and impiety begin to lift up their shameless heads; and such professors not unfrequently make it manifest, that what they have done was not with a perfect heart. This was remarkably exemplified among the Jews, in the days of Jehoiada, the high priest. After he had made Joash king, in opposition to Athaliah, his grandmother, who had usurped the throne, he made a covenant between himself, and between all the people, and between the king that they should be the Lord's people. Religion then came into good repute among them; and idolatry was frowned upon, and suppressed. It continued to be a fashionable thing to serve the Lord, all the days of Jehoiada. But, after some years, he died; and then the princes of Judah, who while he lived, professed the true religion, as did Joash himself, came and made obeisance to the king; and the king hearkened unto them, and they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served idols and groves; and wrath came upon them. Now, there is reason to believe, that many of these persons had done that, which was right in the sight of the Lord; and very probably they were ready to conclude, that they really loved God and his ways. But the fact was, they united in the profession and practice of religion, because it was a reputable thing. And so, if others imitate their example, and unite with the church, and attend to religious duties, only because it is reputable,

whatever they may do, which is right, they have reason to conclude, it is not with a perfect heart.

But there is, perhaps, scarcely less temptation, on the other hand. Though there are seasons, when it is a popular thing to appear to be religious, there are other seasons, when religion, in its strictness and purity, is unpopular. Though it is true, that in almost all places, and at almost all times, persons may make some profession of religion, and attend to some religious and moral duties, without giving much offence, or drawing on themselves much reproach, or contempt from an ungodly world; yet this is not always the case. The state of things is frequently such, that openly to espouse the cause of religion, and unite with those who profess to be its disciples, and truly come out from the world, and take a stand on the Lord's side, will not fail to subject persons to reproach and scorn, if indeed to no severer persecution. Now there is danger, in such seasons, that many persons, who do considerable, that is right in the sight of the Lord, and perhaps go as far, or farther, than their ungodly neighbors are willing they should, in performing outward duties, do yet somewhere, stop short, in the way of duty, lest they should draw on themselves the reproach and scorn of wicked men. They would perhaps be willing to go forward in duty, if it were a reputable thing among their neighbors, or they could by any means make it reputable, and prevail on their neighbours to go with them. But as the case is, they pray to be excused. If they cannot have the concurrence and the company of those, whom they have been accustomed to respect and esteem, in the way of duty, they must concur with them, and walk in their company, though it should lead them, in some things, into paths of disobedience. But, does God allow his people to compound matters, in this manner, with the ungodly? Our Lord's declaration is, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." And again, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and his mother, and wife and children, yea his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." In view of these things, he would have his disciples deliberately count the cost, and make their election, lest when they have put their hand to the plough, looking back they prove themselves unfit for the kingdom of heaven. On one hand, he shows them the straight and narrow path, which "leadeth to life," and assures them, that if they take this, and press forward in it, to whatever reproaches and opposition and trials they may be subjected, it will conduct them to life everlasting. On the other, he shows them the broad road, with all the favor, which an ungodly world can bestow, and assures them, it leads to destruction.

Here, therefore, they must choose for themselves. But he would have them know, that there can be no such thing as walking the broad road, and participating in its carnal pleasures, and in this way, securing the crown of life. If we *will ask* the ungodly, whether we may truly serve the Lord, it is evident, that we set a higher value on the favor of the world, than on the favor of God. And that we revere its authority more than the authority of the Most

High. To the world, therefore, we must look for our reward. Hence, if those who are doing in many respects, that which is right in the sight of the Lord, come to a point of duty, where they stop to ask their neighbours, or friends, whether they *may* go forward without incurring their censure, or their displeasure, and conclude to wait until the duty becomes reputable, they certainly have great reason to conclude, that hitherto, they have not done any thing with a perfect heart.

5. Those who generally do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, have reason to apprehend, that it is not with a perfect heart, if they find themselves habitually indulging in any known sin, or neglecting any obvious duty. God requires that we forsake all the ways of wickedness, and serve him with a cheerful heart and a willing mind. If, in any point, we are disposed to offend, he requires that from this we break off entirely, though it be at the expence of a right hand, or a right eye. In forsaking the ways of wickedness, and turning to the Lord, we are not at liberty to make any reserve. Every way of wickedness is dishonorable to him, and offensive in his sight. Nor is it seen how any reserve can be made in exercising true repentance. The penitent loathes sin, as it is abominable in the sight of God; and he turns from it under the influence of love to God. And surely if love to God influence a man to turn from *any* sin, it will for the same reason influence him to turn from *every* sin. In the very nature of the case there can be no reserve. Because, to make any reserve must imply, that some darling sin is loved more than God, which must be wholly inconsistent with relinquishing any way of sin from love to him. Hence it is characteristic of every true child of God, that he hates every false way. Equally evident is it, that the child of God desires to know and to perform the various duties enjoined upon him. The language of his heart is, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And, with the pious Psalmist he says, Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. If, then, we find ourselves rolling any sin as a sweet morsel under our tongues; if we have our beloved lusts, which we do not desire to mortify and subdue; or if any of God's commandments are grievous to us, and we allow ourselves to neglect the duty enjoined, we certainly have great reason to apprehend, that we have yet done nothing with a perfect heart."

6. Those who do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, have reason to apprehend, that it is not with a perfect heart, if they are very impatient under reproof. Good men are very liable to go astray. Often, indeed, they fall into wickedness, and need to be addressed with the voice of reproof and admonition. And ordinarily, when suitably reproofed, they receive it with kindness. They will always so receive it, if they are in the exercise of a becoming and holy temper. Says the Psalmist, Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head. And every one knows, with what deep self-abasement and contrition, he received reproof from Nathan, the prophet, when he had so grievously sinned,

in the matter of Uriah. How freely he confessed his guilt, and implored forgiveness! So he quietly submitted to reproof from another prophet, when he had committed sin in numbering the people. He exemplified the proverb of his son Solomon, "Rebuke a wise man and he will love thee." Instances have occurred, however, in which even good men, not being humbled for the wrong they had done, have manifested impatience under reproof. Asa, king of Judah, furnishes an example of this. But, if good men manifest such a temper, it furnishes them some reason to doubt their own goodness; for certainly, it is very inconsistent with the proper exercise of gracious affection. And those who are not truly subjects of grace, are ordinarily impatient under reproof, when they go astray. They are ready to justify themselves, and are displeased with those, who condemn their wickedness, however justly or gently it may be done.

Amaziah manifested such impatience, when, having set up the idol gods of Edom to be his gods, he was faithfully reproofed by a prophet of the Lord. While the prophet talked with him he said, Art thou of the king's counsel? Forbear, why shouldest thou be smitten? His temper should have been sufficient to make him fear, that he had done nothing with a perfect heart, and that he was subjected still to the wrath of God. Such conviction it did produce in the mind of the prophet. For he said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel. Others therefore, who refuse suitable admonition, and are angry with reproof, when they have gone astray, have much reason to apprehend, that they have been far from doing any thing "with a perfect heart."

On reviewing this subject, the reader will not fail to perceive the importance of having the heart right with God. If the views which have here been exhibited are correct, they raze from the foundation, every hope of future happiness, which rests on the ground of mere external obedience. If, after all that Amaziah had done, which was right in the sight of the Lord, his real character was odious and abominable, because it was not done with a perfect heart, then all hopes, which rest on an outward performance of religious and moral duties, must surely prove as the chaff that drives before the wind. To those therefore, who imagine, that mere outward morality, or even outward religion is sufficient to secure to them the favor of God, and the happiness of heaven, the subject presents a most solemn warning. It teaches them, that the Lord looketh on the heart, and that the state of the heart determines their character; and it enforces the declaration of Christ to Nicodemus, who was probably himself depending on a mere *outside* religion, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Those who, on any ground, entertain hopes that they are interested in the divine favor, and entitled by divine promise to the joys of heaven, may learn from this subject, the importance of looking carefully to their own hearts. Amaziah probably once thought, that he was interested in the special favor of God. But he was deceived. Multitudes, no doubt, have been the subjects

of a similar deception. The heart is deceitful above all things. There is, besides, a proneness in men, to judge favorably of themselves, or of their own state. Every one desires to be happy. And, as we readily *believe*, what we desire to have true, we are exceedingly *liable* to believe, that we are prepared for future blessedness, when indeed, we have no proper evidence, that such is our state. If, however, we had a correct view of things, we should see, that we can have no possible interest in being deceived. The time must come when we shall be undeceived. Let it be our desire, then, to know ourselves *now*; and that we *may* know ourselves, let us search diligently into our own hearts; and make it our earnest prayer, that God will show us to ourselves: That he will search us, and try us, and see if there is any wicked way in us, and "lead us in the way everlasting." Let it be our constant care, that a flame of holy love be kept burning in our hearts; that we be truly humble and penitent for sin; that our faith in the Redeemer be lively and strong; and that under the influence of holy affection we avoid every way of transgression, and walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Let us do this diligently and constantly, lest being weighed in the ballance, we be found wanting. Let us do this, that being built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, our faith and hope may abide the day of trial, that when the chief shepherd shall appear, we may be bidden welcome to the joys of our Lord.

Finally, the subject duly considered, cannot fail to be highly alarming to the ungodly; to those, of whom it cannot so much as be said, that they do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, *even externally*, but who, judging even from their outward conduct, are characteristically wicked. If men may do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, and still be odious and abominable in his sight, because they do it, "not with a perfect heart," how must those appear, who in life and conversation, as well as in heart, are impious, immoral, and ungodly!

But, there have been instances, in which those who live in the neglect of religion, and in the practice of wickedness, have been so grossly deceived, as to believe, that their hearts were not so bad as their lives, and to entertain the hope that God beheld them with approbation. Now, it is plain, that no imagination can possibly be more vain. For no man's heart was ever any better than his life and conversation. It is from the heart the mouth speaketh; and it may in the same sense be added, from the heart the body acts. Wicked men, to answer some sinister end, may put on the resemblance of morality and religion, and appear unto others, and even unto themselves as righteous. But there is no conceivable purpose for which a good man can assume the garb of wickedness. Hypocrisy is often practised to conceal a bad heart. But no man ever played the hypocrite to conceal a good one. Every one may be assured, then, that he, who is externally wicked, is, in the view of God, equally wicked at heart. If, then, judgment thus begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of those, who have not even

an *apparent* standing there ? If the righteous scarcely are saved, and indeed, many who *appear* to be righteous shall finally perish, *where ! O where ! shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ! !*

ALEPH.

FOR THE EVANGELIST.

Observations on the last part of the 25th chapter of Matthew, beginning at the 31st verse. "When the Son of Man" &c.

In offering a few thoughts on this portion of scripture, I shall endeavour to present the most obvious sense of the sacred writer. I deem it the more important, as I was led to prepare the following pages, in consequence of hearing it called a parable of our Saviour ; and this was represented as the term given by a professed minister of the gospel. Our Lord, with reference to certain inquiries made by his disciples, concerning the *destruction of Jerusalem*, his *coming*, and the *end of the world*, naturally passed, by suitable remarks, to the most important of these events. In a very solemn train of thought he gave the whole a practical turn, fastening their attention upon that tremendous decision which would bear upon the present conduct and future destinies of mankind.

To prepare the way for the plain account which I am about to consider, he spake by the parables of the ten virgins, and of the talents. By the first he enforced the duty of constant watchfulness, from the facts, that he might come unexpectedly, and that some, even of professed christians, would be unprepared. By the latter he taught the importance of a diligent improvement in this life, according to the means and privileges given. This duty he enforced, by representing, in a lucid manner, the reckoning that would be required, and the dangerous consequences of neglect. His coming to judgment, is clearly set forth by the man who travelled into a far country, and returned to reckon with his servants, to whom he had delivered his goods.

How naturally this led to speak literally of the coming of the Son of Man, for the trial of the human race, no one need be informed. The connexion in our Lord's discourse, and the transit from one part to the other is so beautiful and forcible, that we are filled with admiration ; and are compelled to say—"never man spake like this man."

Leaving the parables, and rising on the grandeur and magnitude of his subject, he surveyed the world's last scene with all its bearings and results. And with one comprehensive view, he related the proceedings of the final judgment in the most explicit and intelligible language, saying, "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations." By "the Son of Man" is doubtless meant the Lord Jesus ; and, his "*coming in his glory*," is in opposition to his coming the first time,

in a state of humiliation, to make an atonement for sin. His appearance the second time will be glorious, as an exalted king, and judge. Not for suffering ; but to reckon with mankind, to bring them to an account, and render to all according to the manner in which they have treated his blessings, and improved, or misimproved, by the means and privileges granted. It is not barely said, that " he shall sit upon the throne of his glory, and gather all nations before him," for the hearing of their cause ; but that " he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats ; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Here is introduced a figurative phrase, whereby the separation that shall then take place, is strongly marked and forcibly represented. The ground of division is the moral character sustained. " Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." This is the sentence of the righteous, which will be pronounced by Him who is perfectly acquainted with all hearts. Then follow the reasons, or ground on which judgment will be rendered, that the justice of the decision may appear conspicuous to an assembled universe.— " For I was an hungered and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me ; I was sick and ye visited me ; I was in prison and ye came unto me." Here were not only the external deeds accounted right in themselves ; but by them, the manifestation of a pious and friendly disposition towards him and his cause. And we have also in their answer, an expression of self diffidence, humility, and conscious unworthiness. " Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink ? or a stranger, and took thee in ? or naked, and clothed thee ? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ? And the King shall answer and say unto them ; Verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." In this reply we are taught, that the temper of the heart is regarded ; and that the same disposition, which is manifest in seeking the good of Christ's disciples and kingdom, is also attached to his interest, and acceptable in his sight. " Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This is the sentence to be pronounced upon the wicked ; and it is the reverse of that of the righteous. Instead of being received to the enjoyments of Heaven, they will be condemned, as accursed, and be doomed to the same place of wretchedness, that is prepared for the devil and his angels. The misery is expressed by everlasting fire. Whether the punishment will be inflicted by the application of material fire is not a matter of great consequence to us, if it be faithfully represented by this expression. That our Saviour would not misrepresent the subject, no friend of his will doubt, for a moment. The reason of the decision in this case, is given no less clearly than in the former ; and the sentence will be passed against them, on

account of their conduct, and the disposition manifested thereby, being directly opposite to the character of the righteous. This appears from the declaration of Christ, and the self justifying reply of the wicked. "For I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?—Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."—Here again it is evident, that a want of affection and kindness towards his disciples and his cause, is a full expression of the same deficiency, or of an unfriendly disposition in relation to himself.—After the reasons are thus stated, to show the propriety of the decision, the sentences are repeated together. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." There can be no doubt, how this passage and the connexion have been commonly understood, by intelligent readers in general, from the apostolic age. Neither can there be any doubt what idea would be most naturally received. Therefore it will require, but a few remarks to show, that the most obvious sense is correct—that the punishment of the wicked and the happiness of the righteous, as here taught, will be equal in duration. In the first place, the misery of the wicked is placed in contrast with the happiness of the righteous. This of itself indicates that their circumstances will be opposite. And it is presumed, that none will deny the endless felicity of those who shall be received into the kingdom of Heaven. In the second place, the words used to express the duration of punishment in one case, and of life in the other, are the same in meaning. In the Greek, the same word is repeated, as it were to avoid the least ground of mistake. In our translation it is expressed by everlasting in one case, and eternal in the other. This mode of rendering, I apprehend, is correct. The terms are synonymous, and it improves the style of the language, by avoiding the repetition of the same word. But it may be said that everlasting and eternal, are applied to objects that cannot be endless in their nature, and therefore that they cannot mean endless. This is undoubtedly true; and like the word all, their signification must be determined, by the nature of the object to which they are applied. But it is agreed by the most learned men, that these and the word forever, express the longest duration that the nature of the object, with which they are connected, will admit. This I believe will be found universally true. Then the question is not, what the words mean in some places; but what they mean in this place, as connected with the future existence and destinies of the souls of men.—But perhaps it will be said, that the punishment of the soul cannot be endless in its nature. Yet it remains for those to prove, who deny it, that the soul is not as capable of infinite existence, without holiness, or the approbation of God, as with. If so, it is capable of being miserable without end, under the reproaches of conscience,

the condemnation and displeasure of Heaven. Will it be said, that the original word translated everlasting and eternal does not, in its origin, mean endless, but something pertaining to an age or ages; and is used to express a large unknown extent? If this were true, it would not limit the duration, unless something in the nature of the case should make it necessary. The length of eternity cannot be known; and when we give unbounded scope to our imagination, or to an expression on that subject, no limit is supposed to exist, because there is no conceivable point at which the end shall be fixed. When it is said that the existence of God is for ages of ages, nothing short of endless can be understood, because there is no conceivable limit. This is particularly the case in connexions like our text, where the same word is repeated in contrast with a phrase that is acknowledged to imply endless duration. But notwithstanding all that has been said concerning the meaning of the original word, it is probably the most suitable to express inconceivable, or endless duration of any that could have been chosen in the Greek language; and with its variations, I believe it is more used in the Bible for that purpose, than any other. The word rendered everlasting is *aionion*, an adjective, derived from *aionne*, a substantive, which truly has for one meaning an age. But let those who trace the word thus far, to find a root suited to their views, trace it still farther, and they will find that *aionne* in its simplest form, is compounded, of two small words, *ai* and *owne*, which means being always. Hence it will appear that the true root confirms the meaning, that has generally been given to the word everlasting, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary.

It will appear from the scripture which has been considered, that a few important truths are therein communicated, intended to have great influence upon the character and conduct of mankind; and even to give a weight of solemnity to the whole gospel scheme.

These truths are fully supported by the tenour of the scriptures.

1. It is evident there will be a set time, at some future period, for the trial of mankind. "Because, he (that is God,) hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."—This appears reasonable, that the conduct of men, with their influence through time, may be disclosed; and that the uprightness of the divine administration may be rendered conspicuous to all rational creatures.

2. Christ, the Son of Man, will be the final Judge.

Said the Apostle, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

3. The judgment appears to be closely connected with the second coming of Christ, and immediately following the resurrection.

This is in harmony with all nations being gathered before him.

After our Saviour declared, that he had authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man, he continued, "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good,

unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Many passages might here be quoted, if necessary, to the same purpose.

4. Agreeably to the foregoing consideration, as a preparatory step, all nations, or all mankind, will be gathered before the bar of their Judge.

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."—"So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God."

5. Another important truth is, that all men will receive their final sentences according to their character and conduct in this world.

This appears evident from the grounds of the decision and the parables preceding.

It is also reasonable and consistent with the importance attached to the present life throughout the Bible ; and the stress laid upon an immediate preparation for eternity. "For," says the Apostle, "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good, or bad."

6. A separation will take place among mankind at the judgment.

This is as clearly represented as it could be ; and all are embraced in two distinct classes, according to their character, the righteous and the wicked, or cursed. The same distinction is held up to view throughout the scriptures. It is spoken of with respect to the character of men in this world, at the resurrection of the just and the unjust, and at the final decision.

7. One more truth worthy of attention is the everlasting punishment of the wicked, and the eternal life of the righteous.

The final sentences to be passed upon the two classes are directly opposite, without any intimation of a future change, or of being limited to any set period of time. Hence the fair conclusion, from all the circumstances, is this, that there will not only be two classes in the day of retribution, but, that the punishment adjudged to one, and the blessedness to the other, will be alike eternal.

If the case of Lazarus and the rich man does not represent the future states of the righteous and the wicked, it is difficult to determine what is meant. And it is said, "one is tormented, and the other comforted." "And besides all this, there is a great gulph fixed ; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." Said Jesus, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Saith the Prophet, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Saith the Apostle to the Thessalonians, concerning Christ's coming to judgment, "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power ; when he shall come to

be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." In these scriptures, and many more, the happiness of the righteous and the misery of the wicked are placed in opposite parallel lines; and as to duration, are expressed equally without limits.

REMARKS.

1. If the truths just enumerated are taught in the Bible, it lays a foundation, both for the fear and the love of God.

Justice will be eternally conspicuous in its effects, for the veneration of the intelligent universe; and grace will be no less so, for the wonder, admiration and praise, of the redeemed, out of every nation, kindred and tongue. When all the ransomed of the Lord shall be delivered from sin and its power; and be placed beyond the influence of their enemies, they can behold with grateful astonishment, the abyss of wretchedness from which they are redeemed, and the unspeakable grace that delivered them. And when it shall be seen that some did actually reject the blessings of the gospel to their everlasting ruin, when it shall be known that a real danger of being lost for ever, did exist, the propriety of fearing God, and of all the warnings given to sinners, will be felt and acknowledged. It will be seen, that the strong representations, and awakening considerations of the Bible, were not intended to alarm our fears without some just ground. There was important meaning when our Saviour said, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear Him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea I say unto you, fear him."

2. The sentiments before us furnish motives of eternal weight, for the sinner to repent immediately, and believe in the Lord Jesus.

This life is a precarious possession; and instead of having any encouragement, or hope in neglecting religion, there is infinite danger. On the other hand we have no less to encourage us to "seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near."

3. The subject makes the work and office of a gospel minister of solemn importance.

His labours will prove "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death," in them that hear. And even if he should preach most of the great truths and duties of the christian religion; yet if he neglect, or destroy the powerful motives, presented by Jesus, to embrace the gospel, to obey its requirements, to become holy in this life, for happiness in another, the blood of souls will be found in his skirts. And when we consider the tremendous account to be rendered, "Who is sufficient for these things?"

Finally, what influence should the subject have upon all!

Must we all hear the voice of the archangel and the trump of God? Must we awake from the long slumbers of the grave and see the Son of Man come in his glory? Must we all stand before the bar of Jehovah, and render an impartial account of our conduct? Shall we behold our Judge make the final separation be-

tween the righteous and the wicked ; and hear the decisive sentence, *Depart ye Cursed, or Come ye Blessed ?* " Then, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the Heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

" Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the *Son of Man*."

S. S.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

NO. VII.

Remarks.

1. The success which has attended missionary efforts, affords encouragement to all the friends of the missionary cause. There are in every department of moral and religious duty, correspondent encouragements and discouragements. One of the principal sources of discouragements is want of *immediate success*. "Those prompt charities," says an English writer, "are easy in which the benefit instantly and visibly follows the remedy. Few persons would withhold assistance from a suffering stranger who must evidently expire if deprived of it ; but where the benefit is distant, where the means are only elementary, and the result is afar off, where months and years must elapse before the seed sown in sorrow shall bring forth its harvest of joy, there the heart is too apt to become chilled, and our wishes, outrunning our expectations, refuse to expand in a field, where the prospect of a crop is so distant. Combined with the delay which often attends the success of charitable exertions is the frequent inadequacy of the success when it comes to satisfy our sanguine expectations. We are apt not only to miscalculate the time of the harvest, but to exaggerate in our estimation of the expected quantity of the crop."—But when we look upon the missionary efforts of the present age, there is no reason for discouragement in either of these respects. It is true that success has not, in all cases, been immediate, and, this, from the nature of the enterprize, and the difficulties attending it, could not have been expected.—Long established prejudices, and habits, and customs, especially those of a religious kind, which have enlisted the conscience, and which have been handed down by tradition from fathers to children through many generations, and which, of

course, are connected with all their early associations, cannot be changed at once.

We might naturally suppose that many years must elapse before much fruit would be gathered.—The rugged soil is to be broken up and the seed is to be sown, and time is to be allowed for it to take root, and grow and bear fruit. Now considering what was to be done, and the inadequacy of the means, the very small and disproportionate number of laborers, and vastly more has been accomplished than we had a right to expect in so short a time. The seed is sown for an abundant harvest, even in India where the least success has been manifest. And in the Society and Sandwich Islands, and among the indians on our borders, the crop has already been partially gathered. And in all the places where the missionaries are laboring the prospective view is truly cheering.

The signs of the present time are not to be mistaken. The standard of the cross is planted in almost every land. The nations that have long sat in darkness have seen a great light. The inhabitants of many of the Isles of the Pacific have cast away their idols, and the worship of Jehovah is established in not less than one hundred temples, where, not ten years ago the darkness of heathenism universally prevailed. The pious exertions of Buchanan have resulted in an ecclesiastical establishment for British India; and christian teachers have penetrated into almost every part of that extensive and populous empire. By the zeal and efforts of the United Brethren, the light of the gospel has shone upon the inhospitable shores of Labrador and Greenland. Many of the Hottentots of Africa, the most degraded of our race, have been raised to a state, in which they enjoy the blessings of civilization and christianity. The London Missionary Society, and the American Board of Commissioners have extended their influence far and wide. The long neglected natives of our western wilderness are beginning to enjoy our own comforts and blessings. While missionaries have been sent abroad, a happy impulse has been given to the religious community at home. The minds and hearts of many of different classes and denominations have been opened and expanded “to perceive and feel the common brotherhood of all nations and of all human beings, *as made of one blood, and Redeemed by one Blood.*” As a natural consequence a sense of obligation has been extensively felt “to do good to all men as we have opportunity.” Societies for various charitable and religious objects have been formed, and contributions in churches and congregations, and meeting for prayer, and numerous individual subscriptions, donations, and bequests have been made. Bible societies are extending the treasures of divine truth to the destitute of every land and language. Universal efforts are making to increase the number of able and faithful ministers of the gospel.—The Jews are beginning to yield the accumulated prejudices of eighteen centuries, and to embrace Jesus Christ as the true Messiah. And are not these facts relative to the extension of Christianity in the present age sufficient to encourage the hearts of all the friends of Missions?

2. We learn that it is by means of missionary labours that hea-

then nations are to become civilized. For proof of this we have actual experiment, and are therefore in no danger of being deceived. When experiment is beyond our reach, speculations may be indulged, and conclusions drawn by one, and objected to by another. But when we are favoured with experiment and proof equal to demonstration, it would be as criminal as it is absurd, to shut our eyes on facts and deny their existence. Now in view of the facts contained in the preceding numbers, it appears that the most, if not the only successful way, to *civilize* a savage people, is to *christianize* them.—Look at the Society Islands, and see what influence the gospel has had upon their civil state. The whole population of Otaheite has been civilized. Their whole character is changed. Activity has taken the place of indolence, and good will of enmity. All that is dear to the human heart, in the enjoyment and exercise of friendly feeling and intercourse, all that is tender in the relative affections of domestic life, is introduced to a whole society of human beings, but lately drenched in the pollutions of vice and barbarity. ‘Darkness is dispelled from the minds, treachery from the hearts, and murder from the social intercourse of a whole nation.’ This yields an amount of blessing, and a prospect of happiness, which will flow through many generations to come. Now what produced this great and happy change in their social and civil interests? The whole nation answers,—“It was the gospel of Christ, brought to us by the Missionaries.”

The same effect you will notice has been produced, in a considerable degree, upon the Sandwich Islanders, and upon the Indians in our western forests, so far as the Gospel has gained an influence over them. Experiment now proves that christian principles are, and they only are adequate to transform an idle, dissolute, ignorant, wanderer of the forest, into a laborious, prudent, and exemplary citizen. ‘Other means have been tried without effect. But the plain preaching of the cross has done all this, and infinitely more. It has changed the whole current of desires and affections, imparted a strict conscientiousness, and induced those who were influenced by it, to lead lives of prayer, to practise all the christian virtues, and aspire after heavenly rewards.’

It is the natural tendency of the gospel to civilize. For it both requires holy principle, and prescribes a pure morality. It has a power in its sanctions and motives above all things else, to subdue the corrupt and selfish propensities of the human heart. It inculcates disinterested love—the benevolent desire for the best interests of the human family.—Wherever, therefore, the gospel gains an influence, whether over an individual or a community, it reforms and purifies. Now the highest degree of civilization is, where there is the purest morality, and the only efficacious system of morality is contained in the Bible. It is a *divine* system, not only in its origin, but in its effects, and is not only “given by the inspiration of God,” but it “is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.” And hence we see the happy effects of christianity in all christian

nations. By its transforming influence, it enlightens the dark, and reforms the wicked portions of the earth, and raises them to a participation of the blessings of a civilized community. Such, as we have seen, have already been its effects, and such will still be its effects wherever it is carried, for it has either a direct or an indirect influence over all our institutions, charitable, social and civil. Wherever the hand of charity has been most efficient, it has been under the influence of the gospel, which teaches us "to do good unto all men as we have opportunity." Wherever social happiness has been enjoyed in its purity, it has been under the influence of the gospel, which inculcates all the relative duties of the social state. Wherever civil liberty has been established and preserved, it has been the effect of the gospel which teaches the *equal* origin and rights of men. Indeed, the gospel may justly be considered the indirect source of almost all temporal comforts.—Would we only compare the present condition of christian and pagan nations, this truth would appear obvious. By this comparison we should find, that to the influence of the gospel is to be attributed the existence of orphan houses, hospitals, and asylums for the relief and comfort of the distressed and afflicted. Before the introduction of Christianity there were not, nor are there now, in pagan lands, any systematic efforts for the alleviation of human misery. But in christian nations humane institutions are established for the relief and support of the friendless orphan, the disconsolate widow, the sick and needy stranger. The rights of man are better understood, and better systems of government are adopted. Comfort and happiness are more generally and equally diffused. Who then can doubt, that the gospel is to be the grand instrument of civilizing the uncivilized parts of the world? Wherever it is sent, it produces, upon the social and civil interests of the community, the most salutary effects. Like an overflowing river, which every where enriches and fertilizes its banks, the gospel has every where carried along with it an unfailing stream of mercy to civilize, to ennoble, to bless the human family.

3. Humanity and philosophy as well as christian principle, teach that it is the duty of all to be liberal in the missionary cause.—If such be the consequences of the successful introduction of the religion of the bible, (and none who will open their eyes upon events now transpiring in the world can doubt,) then hard must be the heart, and cruel the hand that refuses to be warm and liberal in the support of those means which are used to send the gospel to the destitute. Every genuine friend of liberty, civilization and humanity, must be the friend of missions.

A system which has produced such good effects upon the community, and whose very principles ensure its salutary influence throughout all ages, should be sent to all people. Those who profess to regard the temporal comfort and improvement of their fellow-men, should shew the sincerity of their profession by aiding the missionary cause, which while its great design is to *save souls*, becomes the most powerful instrument of civilization and happiness in this life. W.

FROM THE NEW-YORK OBSERVER.

THEOPHILANTHROPISTS OF FRANCE.

In our last paper, we gave an extract from Dr. Alexander's work on the Evidences of Christianity, and we now give further extracts, containing an interesting account of the Theophilanthropists of France. After describing several minor efforts of Deists, to establish and maintain religious worship among themselves, the author says :—

The most interesting experiment of this kind, was that made by the Theophilanthropists in France, during the period of the revolution. After some trial had been made of atheism and irreligion, and when the want of public worship was felt by many reflecting persons, a society was formed for the worship of God, by the name just mentioned, upon the pure principles of Natural Religion. Among the patrons of this society, were men beloved for their philanthropy, and distinguished for their learning ; and some high in power.

La Revelliere Lepaux, one of the directory of France, was a zealous patron of the new religion. By his influence, permission was obtained, to make use of the churches for their worship. In the city of Paris alone eighteen or twenty were assigned to them, among which was the famous church of Notre Dame.

Their creed was simple, consisting of two great articles, *the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul*. Their moral system also embraced two great principles, *the love of God, and the love of man* ; which were indicated by the name assumed by the society. Their worship consisted of prayers and hymns of praise, which were comprehended in a manual, prepared for a directory in worship. Lectures were delivered by the members, which, however, underwent the inspection of the society, before they were pronounced in public. To these were added some simple ceremonies, such as placing a basket of fruits or flowers on the altar. Music, vocal and instrumental, was used : for the latter, they availed themselves of the organs in the churches. Great efforts were made to have this worship generally introduced, in all the principal towns of France ; and the views of the society were even extended to foreign countries. Their manual was sent into all parts of the republic, by the minister of the interior, free of expense.

Never did a society enjoy greater advantages at its commencement. Christianity had been rejected with scorn ; atheism had for a short time been tried, but was found to be intolerable : the government was favourable to the project ; men of learning and influence patronised it, and churches ready built, were at the service of the new denomination. The system of Natural Religion, also, which was adopted, was the best that could have been selected, and considerable wisdom was discovered in the construction of their liturgy. But with all these circumstances in their favour, the soci-

ety could not subsist. At first, indeed, while the scene was novel, large audiences attended, most of whom, however, were merely spectators ; but in a short time, they dwindled away to such a degree, that instead of occupying twenty churches, they needed only four, in Paris ; and in some of the principal towns, where they commenced under the most favourable auspices, they soon came to nothing. Thus they went on declining, until, under the consular government, they were prohibited the use of the churches any longer ; upon which, they immediately expired without a struggle ; and it is believed, that not a vestige of the society now remains.

It will be instructive and interesting to inquire into the reasons of this want of success, in a society enjoying so many advantages. Undoubtedly the chief reason was, the want of a truly devotional spirit. This was observed from the beginning of their meetings. There was nothing to interest the feelings of the heart. Their orators might be men of learning, and might produce good moral discourses, but they were not men of piety ; and not always men of pure morals.* Their hymns were said to be well composed, and the music good ; but the musicians were hired from the stage. There was also a strange defect of liberality in contributing to the funds of the society. They found it impossible to raise, in some of their societies, a sum which every Christian congregation, even the poorest, of any sect, would have collected in one day. It is a fact, that one of the societies petitioned government to grant them relief from a debt, which they had contracted, in providing the apparatus of their worship, not amounting to more than fifty dollars, stating that their annual income did not exceed twenty dollars. In the other towns, their musicians deserted them, because they were not paid, and frequently, no person could be found to deliver lectures.

Another difficulty arose which might have been foreseen. Some of the societies declared themselves *independent* ; and would not agree to be governed by the manual which had been received, any further than they chose. They also remonstrated against the authority exercised by the lecturers, in the affairs of the society, and declared that there was danger of their forming another hierarchy.

There were also complaints against them addressed to the ministers, by the agents of government in the provinces, on account of the influence which they might acquire in civil affairs.

The Theophilanthropists were moreover censured by those who had made greater advances in the modern philosophy, for their illiberality. It was complained, that there were many who could not receive their creed, and all such must necessarily be excluded from their society. This censure seems to have troubled them much ; and in order to wipe off the stigma, they appointed a fete, which they called the anniversary of the re-establishment of Natural Religion. To prove that their liberality had no bounds, they prepared five banners to be carried in procession. On the first

* Thomas Paine was one of them.

was inscribed the word *Religion* ; on the second *Morality* ; and on the others, respectively, *Jews*, *Catholics*, *Protestants*. When the procession was over, the bearers of the several banners gave each other the kiss of peace , and that none might mistake the extent of their liberality, the banner inscribed *Morality*, was borne by a professed atheist, universally known as such in Paris. They had also other festivals peculiar to themselves ; and four in honour of the following persons, Socrates, St. Vincent de Paule, J. J. Rousseau, and Washington ; a strange conjunction of names truly !

APHORISMS.

A GOOD MAN.

There are some good men that are just good for nothing. Take them out of the sphere of profession and they always flinch. They have silver tongues ; but God only knows of what metal their hearts are composed. I like the christian that is always at hand,—*Lord here am I ; send me.*—*Ch. Spec.*

SCANDAL.

The way in which some good sort of people are betrayed into scandal is not by forgiving a false story, but by telling what they do not know to be true. There is not so much lying in the world as want of solicitude about truth. Another tosses the fire brand to us and we toss it along. Let such people remember a sentence of Barrow.—*There is no great difference between the great Devil that frameth scandalous reports, and the little imps that trun about and disperse them.* The reader must recollect the etymology of the Greek word, Devil.—*Ibid.*

